What is Claimed is:

1. A method for creating a search string using a computer system, the computer system having a processor, a display, and a browser, the computer system programmed with a server-based program called a search builder, the method

5 comprising the steps of:

selecting a search topic;

defining a plurality of word categories related to the search topic;

forming a word group for each word category;

populating each word group with a plurality of preselected words within

10 the word category, each of the plurality of words within each word group selected to vary the scope of a search relative to the remaining words in the word group;

generating a first search string by selecting a first word from each of a plurality of the word groups to create a search string;

transmitting the first search string to a search engine;

15 receiving a first data set from the search engine;

creating a second search string by replacing the first word of a first word group of the first search string with second word from the first word group;

transmitting the second search string to the search engine; and,

receiving a second data set from the search engine.

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2. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of selecting a search topic includes the steps of:

depicting on the display at least one search topic;

the user selecting the search topic from the at least one search topic; and,

responsive to selection by the user of the search topic displaying a

plurality of pre-selected word groups.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the step of generating a first search string

5   comprises the steps of:

displaying a plurality of word group headings to the user;

the user selecting a first word group heading;

displaying the pre-selected words populating the first word group to the

user;

10   the user selecting a first word from the first word group;

entering the first word from the first word group into a first search string;

displaying the plurality of word group headings to the user;

the user selecting a second word group heading from the plurality of

displayed word groups;

15   displaying the pre-selected words populating the second word group;

the user selecting a first word from the second word group; and,

adding the first word from the second word group to the first search string.

4. The search builder display method described in claim 1 wherein the

20   visual cue includes displaying the search word types in selected color codes and in text.

5. The search builder display method described in claim 4 where the step of

displaying the word types includes displaying standardized terms identifying each word

type, the terms selected from the group consisting of a subject, action, feature,

knowledge, location, date and domain.

6.   The search builder display method described in claim 4 wherein the

5   visual cue includes displaying the search groups color coded to the word types.

7.   The search builder display method described in claim 1 wherein the step

of displaying the pre-selected words in a group to the user includes displaying pre-

arranged controlled vocabulary drop down menus for each word group.

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8.   The search builder display method described in claim 1 wherein the step

of entering the first word from the first word group includes displaying the first word in

a text box and in the display associated with the word group.

15   9.   The search builder display method described in claim 1 wherein the step

of selecting a first word from the first word group includes selecting an accept button

which enters the first word into a search string.

10.   The search builder display method described in claim 1 which further

20   comprises the step of displaying a clear button which when clicked deletes words in the

text box.

11.   The search builder display method described in claim 1 which further

comprises the step of displaying a selected search word includes displaying the selected

search word in a sequence of words color coded to correspond to the word group from which the selected search word was selected.

12. The search builder display method according to claim 1 further comprises

5   displaying a topics button that when selected displays a list of the available search topics.

13. The search builder display method described in claim 1 which further comprises the step of displaying a search button which when clicked displays a color

10   coded search string comprised of at least one selected word and a list of pre-selected search engines or searchable databases.

14. The search builder display method described in claim 1 which further comprises the step of displaying a clear and start over button which when selected

15   displays a list of pre-arranged search engines or searchable databases.

15. The search builder display method described in claim 1 which further comprises displaying a Save Search button which when selected saves a search string builder configuration and search word query.

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16. The search builder display method described in claim 15 which further comprises displaying a Load Last Saved Search button and a text box containing Saved Searches, the Load Last Search button operable to enter a saved search word query into a text box.

17. A computer implemented method of searching the world wide web comprising the steps of:

selecting a topic to be searched;

5   creating a hierarchical search string comprising an ordered series of search words, one search word selected from at least one of a plurality of pre-selected, ordered controlled vocabulary word groups;

transmitting the ordered search string to a search engine; and,

receiving a first set of search results.

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18. A method of offering search services for searching the world wide web comprising the steps of:

providing a web site accessible through the world wide web;

providing access through the web site to a data base of files accessible

15   through the world wide web;

providing a category of search that can be conducted through the web site;

for each search category providing a plurality of word groups from which to assemble a hierarchical search string;

20   cueing a remote user to construct a hierarchical search string by sequentially displaying a plurality of categorical word groups, the user selecting a first word from at least one of the displayed word groups;

transmitting the search string to a search engine; and,

receiving and displaying a first search result to the user.